



## **Owen County Highway Department Snow and Ice Control Policy**

### **Hours of Operation:**

After evaluating the severity of a winter weather event as well as conditions of the roads the Highway Superintendent will determine the hours of operation for snow removal crews. Generally, we will have two 14 hours overlapping shifts in order to ensure 24 hour coverage. If the winter weather events are severe equipment may be mobilized at any time and will operate continuously until the roads are open.

### **Plowing, Salt and Sanding Standards:**

Owen County does not currently have a "Bare Pavement Policy".

Limited salt/sanding will be performed during the snowfall event in appropriate areas until snowfall has stopped. Salt/ Sand may be ineffective in keeping a roadway open. During a snow event where, continuous plowing is required applying salt/sand would be ineffective as it would just be removed from the roadway.

Salt/ Sand will be placed at intersections, on hills and curves as needed.

Gravel roads will be plowed to remove the snow however salt will never be placed. Salt has been scientifically found to deteriorate the road base drastically during the springtime thaw. Instead, dry 8 stone or sand will be used as an abrasive on gravel roads.

Anti-Skid/ abrasive material will consist of either a salt/sand mixture, sand and stone depending on the road surface. The Highway Department will work with the Sheriff's Department, Spencer/Owen School Corporation and Cloverdale School Corporations Transportation Directors who will alert us of any unsafe areas needing attention.

Owen County has nearly 632 miles of roads which equates to 1264 miles of travel for our winter weather fleet of 15 pieces of snow removal equipment.

The highway department also removes snow at other county properties to ensure safe access.

Major Collector roads and school bus routes will receive high priority. After the snowfall has finished and the arterial roads and school bus routes are sufficient, plows will begin to move to ALL county roads.

The Owen County Highway Department will provide emergency snow removal operations at anytime regardless of priority if requested to do so by the Owen County Sheriffs' Department and the Owen County Department of Emergency Management.

**Widening and Clean Up:**

It is necessary to perform widening operations to remove snow off the travel portion and berm of the roadway onto county right of ways to prepare for subsequent winter weather events. Cul-de-sacs will also be cleared and pushed back during widening operations. Widening and cleanup operations may be performed for up to a week after a substantial snow event and may be continuous during windy conditions.

Owen County has various topographies, some routes may not be able to be plowed by a plow truck. If this is the case it will be plowed with a motor grader. These roads will receive abrasive materials when a plow truck is available.

**Severe Winter Storms:**

During a significant severe winter weather event the Owen County Highway Department Superintendent may need to disregard the normal snow removal policy and issue orders to open as many roads as possible to a one lane width to ensure emergency vehicles are capable of reaching more residents.

The Highway Department may also transport employees to and from work to ensure adequate shift coverage. The Superintendent may instruct Road Foremen and Team Leaders to take pick-up trucks with snow removal accessories home if severe winter weather is pending to ensure a faster response if requested by emergency agencies

**Driveway and Private Roads:**

The Owen County Highway Department **will not** remove snow from private driveways or roads including the portion of the driveways and roads that extend into the county right of way. It is necessary to plow snow from the road surface and place snow in the county right of ways. During this process driveways and private roads may be obstructed. We regret this, however, it is necessary in order to provide a reasonable service on our county residents with our available resources.

**Abandoned Vehicles:**

Abandoned and or vehicles in the county right of way may be towed at the owners' expense. The roadways may not be plowed until the vehicle is removed. We will make reasonable attempt in contacting you before this happens.

**Plowing Snow from Private Property:**

Creating an obstruction on a public roadway is unlawful and you could be held liable for any/all damages or claims. The Owen County Highway Department discourages private property owners and or their representatives from depositing snow on a county road.

If there is a ridge and or loose snow left on the county roads surface it can cause a very dangerous situation for motorists and once frozen can damage snow plow equipment. If you decide to remove snow, crossing a county right of way you are doing so at your own risk and you will be assuming all

responsibilities for any damages caused to public property, private property and utilities. **Be responsible, do your part in keeping the roadways safe.**

**Tips:**

**Be Patient:** Be assured that the highway crews are doing everything possible to keep roadways open and safe. The process can be time consuming especially during severe winter weather events.

**Be Courteous:** Demonstrate caution when approaching a plow truck and do not obstruct their pathway. Speed is a critical component in plowing operations.

**Leave Space:** Keep a distance of roughly 500 feet when following a plow truck so they can utilize the spreaders on the back of the truck properly. This will also help deviate windshield accidents.

**Parking:** Do not park on or along the roadways during severe winter events. Doing so will result in a tow fee and will delay other roads being plowed.

**Vehicle Maintenance:** Keep your vehicle maintained, ensuring you have adequate snow tires suitable for winter travel.

**Driving:** Drive defensively and keep speed to a minimum while driving on snow packed and icy roads.

**Contact Information:**

**We value your input**

**Highway Department Office:**

812-829-3335

Mon- Fri

8am-3:30pm

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OCINHighwayDept>

You may also access information by going to: <https://www.owencounty.in.gov/highway>